



Contact Casey Kyler-West Communications Director  
Telephone (406)444-1520  
Fax (406)444-1394  
E-mail: [ckylerwest@mt.gov](mailto:ckylerwest@mt.gov)

Barbara Wagner, Economist  
(406) 444-5474  
[bwagner@mt.gov](mailto:bwagner@mt.gov)

March 11, 2008

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**(HELENA) --- UNEMPLOYMENT RATE DECREASES TO 3.2%**

(HELENA) --- The state unemployment rate decreased from December 2007 to January 2008 by 0.4%, moving to 3.2%. In comparison, the national unemployment rate for January 2008 decreased 0.1%, going from 5.0% to 4.9%.

"The decrease in the unemployment rate gives greater indication that the impacts of the national economic instability on the Montana economy will be limited," said Labor Commissioner Keith Kelly. "Our economy continues to add jobs for Montana's workers."

Even though seasonally adjusted non-farm payroll employment declined slightly by approximately 1,000 jobs (less than 1%), the total number of Montanans who are working, including agricultural and self-employed workers, increased by 4,131 in January. The number of unemployed workers decreased by 1,841. Montana also experienced small gains in the labor force, bringing 2,290 new workers into the job market.

The seasonally adjusted consumer price index (CPI-U) increased by 0.4 percent between December and January, led by price increases in food and energy of 0.7

percent. Price levels for all items other than food and energy rose 0.3 percent, which is greater than the 0.2 percent increase that occurred in each of the preceding nine months.

Unemployment in the regional economy also decreased from the previous month. Regionally, North Dakota's rate decreased marginally to 3.2%, South Dakota's rate decreased to 2.9%, and Wyoming's rate decreased to 2.7%.

###

*\*Unemployment figures are seasonally-adjusted. Seasonally-adjusted numbers remove the effects of events that follow a more or less regular month-to-month pattern each year. These adjustments make nonseasonal patterns easier to identify. The margin of error for the unemployment rate is plus or minus 0.7 percentage points at the 90 percent confidence level. All questions relating to the calculation of unemployment rates should be directed to the Montana Department of Labor and Industry's Research and Analysis Bureau.*

***The February 2007 Labor Situation Report will be released Friday, March 28, 2008.***

**\*\*\*\*\* INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON THE INTERNET \*\*\*\*\***

**Monthly labor force information for Montana counties are available at:**

**<http://www.ourfactsyourfuture.org/cgi/dataanalysis/?PAGEID=94&SUBID=205>**

**Monthly Montana industry employment information is available at:**

**<http://www.ourfactsyourfuture.org/cgi/dataanalysis/?PAGEID=94&SUBID=199>**

**Annual labor force data for Indian Reservations in Montana are available at:**

**[www.ourfactsyourfuture.org/?PAGEID=67&SUBID=121](http://www.ourfactsyourfuture.org/?PAGEID=67&SUBID=121)**